*The Art of Bridging like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac*

Betty Ann McNeil, DC

Mission and Ministry Impact, Grantee Renewal Conference

September 25-27, 2022, Ypsilanti, MI

**slides are marked in blue**

Day 1 – Sunday 9/25: *The Art of Bridging like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac* *(30 mins)*

**IMAGE: The Art of Bridging… Part 1**

* Who are Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac?

IMAGE: Vincent and Louise

* + He was a Catholic priest and she, a widow, who lived in 17th century Paris and became collaborators in assisting persons who were poor. the Catholic …
	+ Châtilllon (Mlle. De la Chassagne 1617)…told Vincent about a poor family in need….Confraternities of Charity (August) Here Vincent discovered the materially material poverty of persons living in the countryside.

IMAGE: Confraternity of Charity

" As I was about to give the sermon, someone came to tell me there was an indigent man who was sick and very badly lodged in a poor barn I was informed of his illness and poverty in such terms that, moved by compassion, I made a strong plea, speaking with such feeling that all the ladies were touched …

IMAGE: Dynamics of Bridging

Vincent established the Congregation of the Mission (1625); Vincent engages the widow Louise in his works of charity (1626-1629)…she had been depressed and felt that “days [seemed] like months”[[1]](#endnote-2) …this generated the dynamics of bridging…

* Mme Goussault, Geneviève Fayet, widow of Antoine Goussault, initiated and became the first president of the Ladies of Charity of Hôtel-Dieu (1634)…This organization “began in a small way and, at first, was merely intended to assist the patients of this great hospital,” however, its impact magnified beyond expectations.[[2]](#endnote-3)

IMAGE: Vincentian Foundations

* + Within less than 20 years, Vincent and Louise’s bridging efforts multiplied. They Had established four foundations.
		- Confraternities of Charity throughout the countryside and in Paris
		- Congregation of the Mission (priests and brothers)
		- Daughters of Charity
		- Ladies of Charity International Association of Charity (AIC)

IMAGE: WISDOM FOR ALL AGES

In his assessment of the spiritual and material poverty among persons living in the countryside Vincent saw challenges and opportunities. The spiritual poverty of a dying peasant opened Vincent eyes to pastoral needs, transforming his personal pursuit for self-aggrandizement into compassion for human misery and zeal for souls.

* + - Vincent invited persons in his orbit to work together in developing strategies and…, recognizing stress, and caring for ourselves to be of service.
			* “Our Lord wants us to serve him with common sense, and the opposite is called indiscreet zeal.”[[3]](#endnote-4)

IMAGE: STRESS MANAGEMENT

IMAGE: Thank you!

Day 2 – Monday 9/26, *The Art of Bridging like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac* *(20 mins)*

**IMAGE: The Art of Bridging, Part 2**

* The Confraternity of Charity at Hôtel-Dieu (Ladies of Charity) “was **the most important** [project] …and offers the most notable example of bridging
	+ - * From the social position of its members and family connections (niece of Cardinal Richelieu, wife of the Chief Justice, and a queen),
			* The extent of its field of action (beyond Paris),
			* The amount of aid received and distributed.[[4]](#endnote-5)

IMAGE: Vincent meets with Ladies of Charity

* The ladies undertook the care of the foundlings of Paris, … Care of foundlings, unwanted babies (1638) Louise…budget issues…
	+ Vincent appealed to the Ladies of Charity …Duchess D’Aiguillon (Marie de Wignerod de Pontcourlay), niece of Richelieu, widowed at 18, lady of the bedchamber of Marie de Médicis (mother of Louis XIII)…surrendered jewels! [[5]](#endnote-6)

….

IMAGE: Early Daughters of Charity—Servants of the Poor

* Mme Goussault (nee Geneviève Fayet) influenced the Daughters of Charity to launch their first hospital ministry, Hôpital Saint-Jean, Angers (1639)
* In some cases, Vincent resorted to investing in houses, capital that had been received in cash. [[6]](#endnote-7)
	+ - This he did with the 24,000 livres (more than a million dollars) …
		- and housed refugees fleeing from the battle zone.

IMAGE: The Vincentian Way

We have seen that Vincent assessed challenges in his efforts to address spiritual and material poverty. We can identify how Vincent determined or judged what must be done in the face of human misery. His way is our Vincentian Way.

…

 Vincent recognized the need for social change and instructed his first volunteers that “People…have sometimes suffered a great deal, more through a lack of organized assistance than from lack of charitable persons.”[[7]](#endnote-8) His artful bridging generated dynamism for change.

Image: Thank you!

Day 3 – Tuesday 9/27:The Art of Bridging like Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac *(15 mins)*

**IMAGE: The Art of Bridging, Part 3**

Collaboration by numerous partners illustrate how Vincent and Louise exercised their skills in the art of bridging for the common good for multiple populations. The Ladies of Charity allocated sums of money to missionaries for the propagation of the Faith in China, Tonkin, Madagascar, and the Hebrides.”[[8]](#endnote-9)

* …

IMAGE: **War**—Death, Destruction, and Misery

* **"War on all sides; misery on all sides".**
	+ Prayer was just the first thing, and it had to lead on to action. The first news of the alarming situation in these regions reached Vincent in 1650 ..

IMAGE: Using Vincentian Lens …Social Transformation

Yesterday, we looked at various ways Vincent judged situations of human misery in light of social transformation so people could act with dignity and flourish. Today we focused on how When circumstances require decisive action:

* What can we do to bridge the gap between what is happening (the reality) and what should be happening (the ideal/what our faith says)?
* What do local people want for themselves? How would they want to shape their future? Are we willing to include them in planning?
* Who shares our vision and values? Who else could support our action?

IMAGE—Hallmark of Vincentian Service

I have highlighted experiences of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac as they engaged collaborators to provide social assistance and initiate systemic change. Non-

IMAGE—-CREDITS

IMAGE—Thank You

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. P [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)